



**File Code:** 1950

**Date:** September 27, 2016

Marina Richie  
1012 13th Street  
La Grande, OR 97850

Dear Ms. Richie:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about the Lostine Project on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

I understand your attachment to the Lostine Corridor and can assure you that the Forest recognizes the values of the area. The project is designed to help reduce risks to both the people who travel and use the corridor, and the many special resource values that you described in your letter. The Forest is working closely with the local community to reach that balance you recommended between public safety and protecting the wild and scenic river values.

I recognize it is common to have different perspectives of success on National Forest projects due to the diverse interests within the communities where we work. However, I understand that there is generally broad support from the local communities in Wallowa County regarding the Lostine Project. I encourage you to continue working with the Wallowa Mountains Office to gain clarity on the proposed actions in the Lostine Corridor. From your characterization of the proposed activities, I believe there may be some misunderstanding of the silvicultural prescriptions. For instance, while the proposed actions do include several "group select" openings, they are designed to be two acres or less, not 500 acres.

While the Lostine Corridor is surrounded by the Eagle Cap Wilderness, it was excluded from wilderness designation because of the private land uses and the values of the corridor as a developed recreation destination. That section of the Lostine River is also designated as a Recreation Wild and Scenic River. As such, the Forest Service is committed to managing the resources in the corridor in support of those values, including mitigating hazards that may impact safe use of the corridor by the public and private landowners. Part of that effort is management of hazard trees adjacent to developed sites. It is our responsibility to manage developed sites on National Forest System lands for public safety as the first consideration and we will continue to identify and mitigate hazard trees in areas we are inviting the public to enjoy their National Forests. The District would welcome you to join them in a field review of the rigorous process they go through to identify and mitigate hazard trees, under the guidance of Forest Service and Interagency protocols<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Forest Service Manual, Chapter 2330, Supplement 2300-2011-1; *Publicly Managed Recreation Opportunities, Field Guide for Hazard-Tree Identification and Mitigation on Developed Sites in Oregon and Washington Forests*, USDA Forest Service PNW Region, 2014, and *Field Guide for Danger Tree Identification and Response*, USDA Forest Service PNW Region, and USDI Bureau of Land Management, 2008.



I also understand that you feel the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has not conducted any environmental analysis of the Lostine Project. I can assure you that we are being deliberate in our assessment of the Lostine Project and are following approved environmental planning authorities under NEPA.

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest looks forward to working with interested citizens to sustain our Forests resources through fostering resilient and adaptive ecosystems. Please feel free to contact Kris Stein, District Ranger in Wallowa County, at [krisstein@fs.fed.us](mailto:krisstein@fs.fed.us) or 541-426-5501, if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



THOMAS MONTOYA  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Kris Stein, Karen Wagner, Kathleen Cathey, Mary Gautreaux